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ARMSTRONG & COMPANY

*Artistic Lithographers*



Charles Armstrong (photograph, Sarony's Imperials,  
680 Broadway, N.Y.)

# Armstrong & Company

ARTISTIC LITHOGRAPHERS

*A survey of Charles Armstrong's business  
in black-and-white lithography and chromolithography,  
based on the Leeds Armstrong Wheeler Collection,  
Boston Public Library, with a chronology and  
selective checklist by Marilee Wheeler  
and an essay by Leeds Armstrong Wheeler*

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## Foreword

*Armstrong & Company, Artistic Lithographers* is issued to accompany the first showing of pictures from the Leeds Armstrong Wheeler collection of the work of the Armstrong firm.

A survey of the life of Charles Armstrong and the work of his company, rather than a listing of pictures in the exhibition, the book has been planned as a lasting source of information.

Mrs. Leeds Wheeler gave the collection to the Boston Public Library in memory of her husband, the late Leeds Armstrong Wheeler. She suggested the publication, as well, and gave it her backing. We are grateful to her, and to her daughter, Marilee Wheeler, who has prepared most of the text and chosen the illustrations in these pages. Sinclair Hitchings, Keeper of Prints at the Boston Public Library, assisted in preparation of the book.

The Wheeler Collection comprises hundreds of lithographs by the Armstrong firm. It also contains extensive material which reveals the life and talents of Charles Armstrong. There are ephemera, ranging from trade cards to photographs of the staff of Armstrong & Company, which are invaluable to the historian. Also in the collection are Leeds Wheeler's notes and files on the company and some of its contemporaries in American lithography in the late nineteenth century.

The collection is all the more valuable at the Boston Public Library because of the Library's outstanding collections of black-and-white lithographs and chromolithographs by other firms, including the largest public collection of the chromos of L. Prang & Co. Early in his career, Charles Armstrong worked for Louis Prang. The two men remained lifelong friends. The Armstrong firm

was smaller with its own distinctive identity derived from Charles Armstrong himself. It is a pleasure to present here a brief account of the company which is also a chapter in American business history.

PHILIP J. MCNIFF

*Director, Boston Public Library*

## Preface

Chromolithography, which began in Europe and spread to America in the nineteenth century, flourished for roughly fifty years, from 1850 to 1900, as a means of conveying pictures in color to a mass audience.

The career of Charles Armstrong as a chromolithographer of distinction fills these same fifty years, and give us an opportunity to look at the phenomenon of the chromo through the experiences of a practitioner.

The Armstrong firm issued a wide range of prints, including popular sentimental chromos in the prevailing fashion, but its proud banner of “artistic lithography” was more than justified by specialties which included sporting prints, the theatre, the world of music, and scientific illustration. Book collectors remember two ventures in illustration which are outside the realm of science—the chromo illustrations of Celia Thaxter’s *An Island Garden* and Thoreau’s *Cape Cod*, both from the 1890s.

A collection-within-a-collection, among the prints gathered by Leeds Wheeler, reveals the talents of J. E. Baker, a lithographic draftsman who was a mainstay of the Armstrong firm and was well known among American lithographers. There are many designs in black and white, including a large group of sheet music covers. Leeds Wheeler had a special interest in sheet music with pictorial covers lithographically printed. The covers, by Baker and others, would yield a separate exhibition.

It is a privilege for the Boston Public Library to present these pages on a Boston firm which contributed to a popular phenomenon in graphic art, one with elements of craftsmanship, art, entre-

preneurship, and technology. The printers of today who do fine four-color process reproductions, and especially those who make skillful reproductions of paintings, are descendants of the chromolithographers like Charles Armstrong who worked out and printed a succession of colors, sometimes up to thirty or more, through which they could create the illusion of an oil painting.

SINCLAIR HITCHINGS

## The Leeds Armstrong Wheeler Collection of Lithography and Chromolithography by Charles Armstrong and Armstrong & Company

This collection of lithographs by Armstrong & Company and of other work by Charles Armstrong and artists who worked at his firm was assembled by Leeds Armstrong Wheeler, 1897–1969. The son of Charles Armstrong's oldest daughter, Leeds Wheeler as a child lived in Allston in the same house as his grandfather who was by then retired. Besides this personal acquaintance, he heard many stories about his grandfather told by his mother and grandmother who idolized the artist.

Only a few Armstrong & Company lithographs remained in the family. As early as his days as a student at Harvard Law School, however, Leeds Wheeler's interest in his grandfather attracted him to print and antique shops where he was always delighted to find another Armstrong lithograph. His Armstrong collection later became a time-consuming hobby and always occupied some part of family trips in New England and New York.

In the Thirties his curiosity extended to seeking out artists who as young men had worked at Armstrong & Company. These men, now retired, were eager to talk about their work and life at the firm, and, being flattered by the interest shown, in some instances presented proofs and lithographs to him for which, despite hard times, they refused payment. Out of these interviews came the inspiration for a book on the work of Armstrong. In the late Thirties and through the Forties in his very limited time free from his profession

as a corporate lawyer in Boston, Leeds Wheeler researched and wrote the book. His studies took him to the Boston Public Library, the Harvard Theater Collection, and as far afield as the New York Public Library and the Smithsonian. The subject matter expanded to include information on the history and techniques of lithography as well as Armstrong's work as a young man in England and later in New York and at Prang & Company. A chapter from this book is included in this catalogue. Although never published, a typescript of the entire volume is kept with the collection and is available at the Print Department of the Boston Public Library. Titled *Armstrong & Co., Artistic Lithographers*, it consists of the following chapters:

- Lithography in Boston: The Early Years of Armstrong & Co.
- The Middle Years, 1875–1887
- The Nineties
- The Lithographic Artists at Armstrong's
- The Making of a Chromolithograph
- Armstrong's Training in Art; London in the 1850's
- Early Years in America: New York City
- Armstrong's Lithographs at L. Prang & Co. and Armstrong, McLellan & Green, Boston
- The Decline of Artistic Lithography
- Checklists of Lithographs of Armstrong & Co.

The family of Leeds Wheeler gave his collection of prints by Armstrong & Company and his research files (among them letters from lithographers and notes on interviews) to the Boston Public Library in 1979. His typescript and files contain a wealth of information on the meteoric rise and fall of artistic lithographic publishing in the nineteenth century and on the art interests in Boston in the 1870s and 1880s.

MARILEE WHEELER



## Chronology



Victoria Medal (actual size) awarded to Charles Armstrong in 1854

### 1836

Charles Armstrong was born at Bryanston Square, London, England. His father, Thomas Armstrong, was one of the more accomplished British wood engravers of the day. Jackson and Chatto's *Treatise on Wood Engraving* refers to the illustrations for *Book of the British Ballads*, edited by S. C. Hall and published in 1842, as "cleverly engraved by T. Armstrong." His uncle, who lived next door, was a member of the Royal Society of Surgeons of England. By coincidence, in view of Charles Armstrong's later career, the year 1836 marked the first appearance in England of prints in color from stone.

### 1850

Armstrong enrolled at a leading art school at Marlborough House School (later South Kensington Museum School and still later the Victoria and Albert Museum). He had already received some training from his father. His work during this period included:

- a tint of a woman's head;

- a lithograph from a sketch by Sir Joshua Reynolds of Mrs. Armstrong, Mrs. Siddons' daughter, "when she was a naughty girl".

### 1854

- a large crayon life study for which he won a Victoria Medal at the Fall Exhibition.

### c. 1850–1857

Armstrong, while pursuing his art studies at Marlborough House, served the usual seven-year apprenticeship with Leighton Brothers in London. From this apprenticeship there are no signed works by Armstrong. He considered himself a "wood engraver" but is known to have worked on a large chromolithograph, *The Queen Receiving the Guards*. This was done after a painting by John Gilbert commemorating the return of the Guards to London after the Crimean War. George Leighton of the firm was making rapid improvements in chromatic printing during this period, although he was at first prevented by patent from using the method developed by George Baxter



(Head of a Woman), lithographed by Charles Armstrong 1850–54  
during his student years in England



under whom he had apprenticed. Armstrong learned all the color methods used by Leighton as well as black and white wood engraving.

### 1858–1866

Having completed his apprenticeship, Armstrong joined Vincent Brooks which had in the previous year taken over part of the lithographic business of George Leighton. In 1856 Vincent Brooks had done the first chromolithograph for the Arundel Society, founded by Ruskin to produce reproductions of old masters with perfection. In 1867 Vincent Brooks acquired the good will of Day & Son, Ltd., and the firm became Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Ltd. Armstrong rose from a journeyman lithographer to the leading lithographic artist at Vincent Brooks. A German dictionary of artists published in Leipzig in 1872, Meyer's *Künstler-Lexikon*, refers to him as a "vortrefflicher chromolithograph," a very fine chromolithographer. Work by Armstrong at Vincent Brooks includes:

### 1862

- some or all of the chromolithographs after paintings by John Gilbert illustrating Shakespeare's *Songs & Sonnets*.

### 1865

- set of chromolithographs of *Hunting Scenes* after black and white drawings by John Leech which the artist had later colored. The most important of these is *The Hunting Parson* (16" x 25", 30 stones).

Other work by Armstrong done in England (we do not know whether at Vincent Brooks or at Leighton Brothers) includes the following, listed as among his best in Meyer's *Künstler-Lexikon*:

- *Bay of Naples* from a watercolor by Thomas M. Richardson (14" x 42", 28 stones);
- *Loch Lomond* after a watercolor by Aaron Penley (15" x 24", 23 stones);
- two lithographs from watercolors by Henry Jutsum (14" x 18", 17 stones each);



Three watercolor sketches made in the early 1860s



Photograph of  
Charles Armstrong



Page from a sketchbook kept by Charles Armstrong

— facsimiles after watercolors by Pine to be used as examples by the students in the English Governmental Drawing Schools (9" x 13", 18 stones each).

As a young man in London, Armstrong was popular at dances and enjoyed theater, riding, and especially boating. He acquired a small yacht, *The Bittern*. In 1864 he won a cup from the Nautilus Rowing Club for a sculling race in which he was teamed with his friend Charlie Dickens, son of the author. Among his artistic friends was Frederick Hollyer, a painter and photographer, who had married Armstrong's sister and whose brother Samuel had emigrated to the United States where he was an engraver. In 1865 Armstrong married Julia Brook of the Isle of Wight. As he reached his thirtieth birthday, he was recognized as one of the leading lithographers in England and the coming man in the color field. Although

he was being rewarded by what other lithographers regarded as a high salary, he was enticed by the opportunities abroad in a country where chromolithography was just beginning.

#### 1866

Armstrong emigrated to the United States and settled near Washington Square in New York City. He was soon joined by his wife and young son, Charles, who later would apprentice at Armstrong & Co.

#### 1867

With Herman Bencke, Armstrong set up the firm of Armstrong and Bencke, located at 483 Broadway. The partnership may have been informal, with Armstrong drawing on the stones and Bencke printing them. The most popular lithograph pro-



(Standing boy) chromolithograph, on stone by Charles Armstrong  
during his years in England, after a watercolor by Jutsum



duced by this short-lived firm was *The Old Oaken Bucket* after a painting by Jerome Thompson.

1867

Charles Armstrong moved his family out of the city to Shadyside, New Jersey, above the Palisades.

1868 or early 1869

Armstrong signed a favorable three-year contract with L. Prang & Co. and moved his family to Boston. Prang, a businessman intent on produc-

ing in America chromolithographs on a par with the superior work being done in England and Germany, had sought out Armstrong in New York after hearing him praised by English authorities.

L. Prang & Co. moved into a new building early in 1869. Prang had brought a number of German lithographers to the firm with the result that German and English were used indiscriminately both in conversation and instructions on proofs. Armstrong was therefore grateful for a gift of a German-English dictionary from his



Charles Armstrong (1867 photograph by P. Gurney & Son,  
707 Broadway, N.Y.)



*Joy of Autumn*, chromolithograph by L. Prang & Co., 1870, after a painting  
by William Hart. On stone by Charles Armstrong



*Rev. Henry Ward Beecher*, chromo by L. Prang & Co., on stone by Charles Armstrong,  
in association with J. Howard Collier, 1871



mother during his first year at the firm. The head of the artists' room was William Harring von Ammon, who signed his lithographs W. Harring.

Armstrong drew only about a dozen lithographs while at Prang's but several were chosen by Prang to be sent to exhibits, and received praise at home and abroad. Among these were:

#### 1869

- *Launching of the Lifeboat* after a painting by Edward Moran (24" x 13", 25 stones). This was listed in Meyer's *Künstler-Lexikon* and favorably reviewed in leading art journals including *The London Art Journal* and *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst*;
- *Summer* after a painting by A. T. Bricher.

#### 1870

- *Mount Chocorua* after a painting by Benjamin Champney;
- *Prairie Flowers* from a painting by Jerome Thompson. The chromo was favorably reviewed in *The London Art Journal*;
- *Dessert No. 3* after a painting by C. P. Ream;
- *Joy of Autumn* from a painting by William Hart. This print was part of Prang's exhibit at the Vienna Exposition of 1873 and won the firm the gold medal in lithography. It was also listed in Meyer's *Künstler-Lexikon* and was favorably reviewed in the *London Art Journal*.

#### 1870–1871

- *Close of Day* from a painting by Arthur Parton;
- *Lashed to the Shrouds* from a painting by Theodore Kaufman.

#### 1871

- *Henry Ward Beecher*. This portrait was worked on stone by Armstrong in association with J. Howard Collier after an oil painting from life by an unknown artist. The Rev. Beecher said of it, "The chromo of Prang's is regarded by my friends as excellent, both in color and in resemblance to the original."

Armstrong established a partnership with John E.

Green, a lithographer who had been in business for himself, and Daniel M. McLellan, who had some lithographic training but was primarily a businessman. The new firm was without adequate financial backing and could not aspire to fine color work, but the partners held themselves out as "Practical Chromolithographers" doing "every description of Lithography, Engraving and Printing for the Merchant, Manufacturer, Advertiser, Publisher, Counting Room, etc. by Hand and Steam Power Presses." The firm of Armstrong, McLellan and Green was short-lived but produced several known works:

- *Camilla Urso*, a black and white portrait drawn and printed expressly for *The Folio*, a journal described by its publishers as the best musical journal in the land. Its editor, Dexter Smith, later started his own musical paper for which Armstrong & Co. did many portraits;
- *Chicago in Flames* from a sketch by E. Knoble, resembling a hand-colored Currier & Ives lithograph but actually printed from four stones in colors: black, blue, red, and yellow.
- *3rd Size Steam Fire Engine Built by the Silsby Manufacturing Co.*, also resembling a Currier & Ives, but printed in colors.

#### 1872

Armstrong established Armstrong & Co., referred to on a business card as Artistic Lithographers. This was first located on Milk Street but was burnt out by the Great Fire of November 9, 1872, which destroyed downtown Boston. After several temporary addresses, the company settled on Congress Street in 1874 only to be burnt out again by a local fire. The move was then made to Daye Court, Cambridge, where the firm prospered in a group of old cottages without electricity which had formerly been the Poor House. These buildings were rented from Houghton Mifflin & Co. which was holding the land for further development. In 1875 Armstrong & Co. merged with Houghton Mifflin, becoming an independent department of the publishing concern in the same manner as Riverside Press. The name Armstrong



3RD SIZE STEAM FIRE ENGINE BUILT BY  
**THE SILSBY MANUFACTURING CO.**  
 SENECA FALLS, N.Y.

*3rd Size Steam Fire Engine Built by The Silsby Manufacturing Co., 1871 or 1872,  
 lithographed in colors by Armstrong, McLellan & Green, 15 Bowker St., Boston*

& Co. was retained as was a succession of mailing addresses in Boston. The firm continued producing lithographs for other publishers in addition to doing work for Houghton Mifflin. When, much later, Houghton Mifflin decided to discontinue its lithographic work, Armstrong continued lithography in his own name. Despite bad economic times he was able to keep some of his skilled staff together, and because of his high reputation could hold some of his customers of long standing.

During the period of Armstrong & Co.'s existence, lithography was beginning mass production

but was still more an art than a business. In 1867 the steam lithographic press had been introduced into the United States, allowing long runs of prints. Although the machinery was expensive, for black and white lithographs the steam press was very efficient. In chromolithography it took a number of years to iron out technical problems caused by the steam presses; high-quality work was therefore still done by uneconomical hand presses. For this reason most of the early work of Armstrong & Co. was in black and white. For some time the company employed D. C. Fabronius and Joseph





*The Old Armchair, chromolithograph, 1873*



*Clara Louise Kellogg*

Drawn & Printed  
FOR  
DEXTER SMITH'S PAPER  
BY  
ARMSTRONG & CO. 43 BRISTOL ST  
BOSTON

Clara Louise Kellogg, lithograph by J. E. Baker, published November 1873 in the series prepared by Armstrong & Co. for Dexter Smith's Musical Paper, 1873-75





*Teresa Carreno.*



*Teresa Carreno*, lithograph by J. E. Baker, published c. 1873 in the series prepared by  
Armstrong & Co. for *Dexter Smith's Musical Paper*

E. Baker, two of the country's leading artists in black and white lithography. Later, Armstrong & Co. became a leader in producing color lithographs. These were drawn on stone by hand in order to preserve qualities impossible with photographic processes but were printed by power presses, allowing long runs. The leading lithographic artist in color work at Armstrong & Co. was Gerard A. Klucken. Although various lithographers served over the years as head of the artists' room, Charles Armstrong himself carefully supervised all artistic production. Most of the remainder of this chronology consists of a listing of outstanding and curious lithographs produced by Armstrong & Co.

- *Launching of the Lifeboat*. Drawn on stone by J. E. Baker. Armstrong had done the drawing on stone for a lithograph of the same general subject at Prang & Co.;
- *Grant and Wilson*. These black and white portraits of the candidates of the Republican party were shown in ovals separated by a shield with the quotation, "Let us have peace. The Nation's Choice. Nov. 1872";
- *Laying of the Foundation of the B. & A. R. R. Elevator at East Boston*. Construction of this grain elevator was important in attracting trans-Atlantic shipping to Boston, an event elaborately publicized by the lithograph;
- Portrait of Leader of Band of H. M. Grenadier Guards for cover of *Grenadier Guards March*, a lithotint by J. E. Baker done in honor of The Great Peace Jubilee and International Music Festival of 1872 held in Boston.

#### 1873

- *Wreck of the Steamship Atlantic, April 1st, 1873 near Halifax, N.L.S.* for cover of *The Little Commodore or the Rescued Boy of the Atlantic*, a two-color lithograph made with a black stone and a tint stone and one of Armstrong & Co.'s most successful music covers;
- *The March of Miles Standish*, a lithotint by J. E. Baker to illustrate lines from Longfellow's poem;

- *The Old Armchair*. This work is illustrative of the Victorian sentimentality shown in many of the miscellaneous lithographs produced by Armstrong & Co. in its early years.

#### 1873–1875

- Dexter Smith Set. *Dexter Smith's Musical Paper* announced in June 1873 that these prints were "by the celebrated lithographers, Messrs. Armstrong & Co., from original drawings by J. E. Baker, their artist, and are universally admitted to be the finest works of the kind ever published." There are twenty-nine of these 9" x 12" black and white portraits. Two surviving proof sheets show the original printing of numerous portraits on one sheet.

#### 1874

- *Homeward and Return from the Fields*, two large black and white lithographs after paintings by Joseph Johns;
- *Lotta in Musette*, two small chromos which were elaborate trade cards for a popular artist;



Lotta in Musette, card in color





*Camilla Urso.*

Drawn & Printed  
FOR  
DEXTER SMITH'S PAPER  
BY C. ARMSTRONG & CO. 43 BRISTOL ST.  
BOSTON

*Camilla Urso*, lithograph by J. E. Baker, published January 1874 in the series  
prepared by Armstrong & Co. for Dexter Smith's Musical Paper

# THE SISTERS' FAVORITE SONGS.



N<sup>o</sup> 1 MY LITTLE PINK.  
 3 WALKING OUT ON SUNDAY.  
 5 MY SAMMY.  
 7 I WANT TO GO HOME.  
 9 THE HORSE-GUARDS BALLOO.  
 11 I SHOULD LIKE TO.

N<sup>o</sup> 2 ITS FUNNY WHEN YOU FEEL THAT WAY.  
 4 SWELL WITH THE ALPINE HAT  
 6 BELLE OF THE BALL  
 8 LET HER APPLY TO ME  
 10 I WISH I WAS.  
 12

BOSTON:

PROVIDENCE R I  
 CORY BRO'S

Published by **G.D. RUSSELL & COMPANY**, 126 Tremont, opp Park St

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1873 by G.D. RUSSELL & CO in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington D.C.

SAN FRANCISCO  
 M. GRAY.

ARMSTRONG & CO LITH. BOSTON.





# SONG & CHORUS,

Words By  
GEO. COOPER.

Music By  
VIOLETTA.

SONG 4

BOSTON.

TRANSCRIPTION

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Published by

John P. Derry & Co.

314 Wash St

TORONTO, ONT.  
A. & S. NORDHEIMER

ST. LOUIS, MO.  
BALMER & WEBER

PHILADELPHIA, PA.  
LEE & WALKER

CHICAGO, ILL.  
G. T. ROOT & SONS

NEW YORK,  
W. A. POND & CO.

CLEVELAND, O.  
BRINARD & SONS

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.  
MCCAY

AUST. L. TA.  
V. T. Sisson

ENHORNATI.  
JOHN CHURCH & S.

PRINTED BY J. E. BAKER, LITHOGRAPHER, 314 WASH ST., BOSTON.

Poor Little Lost One, music sheet cover, 1874, lithograph by J. E. Baker

TO  
MME. FRANCINA YOUNG, BOSTON, MASS.



BOSTON:

Published by **G.D. RUSSELL & COMPANY**, 126 Tremont opp Park St.

PROVIDENCE R.I.  
CORY BROS

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SAN FRANCISCO,  
M. GRAY.

Amesbury & Co. Lith. Boston

*We'll Gather on the Summer Shore*, music sheet cover, 1874, lithograph by J. E. Baker



# ON THE BRIGHT SHORES OF GOLD.



WRITTEN BY GEORGE COOPER. A RESPONSE TO "SWEET BY AND BY." MUSIC BY CHAS. D. BLAKE.



BOSTON

OLIVER DITSON & CO. 277 Washington St.

PHILA  
Lee & Walker

CHICAGO  
Lyons & Healy

NEW YORK  
C. H. DITSON & CO

BOSTON  
J. C. Haynes & Co

CINN  
J. Church & Co

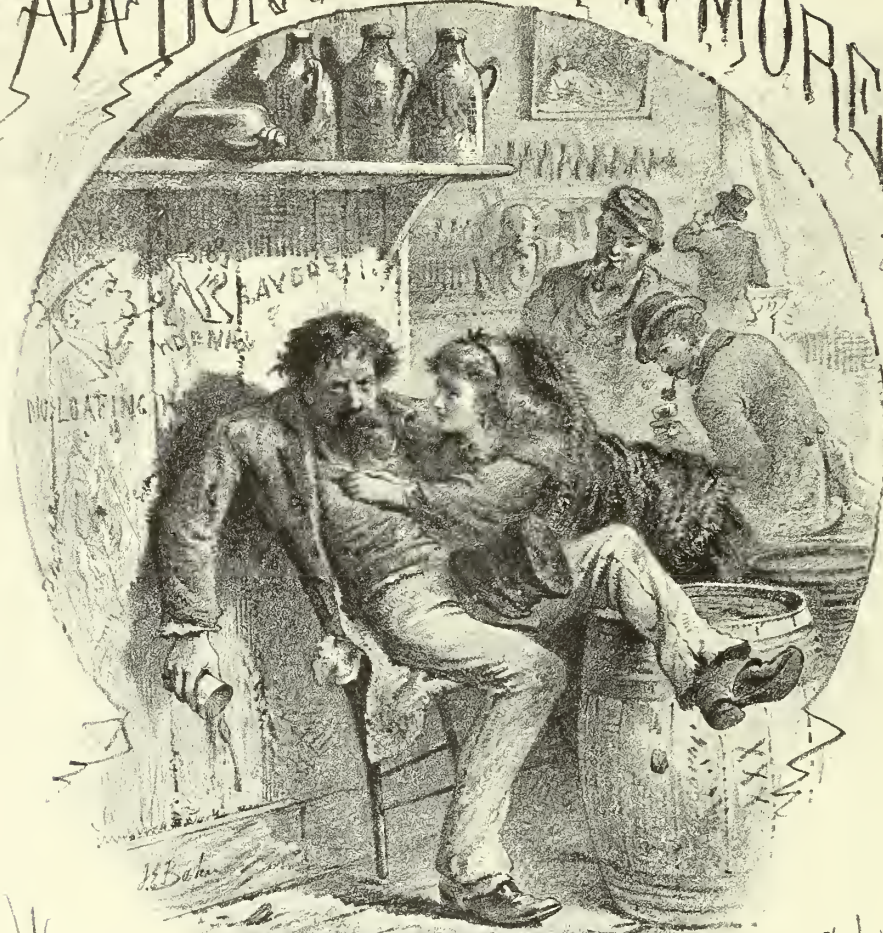
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ARMSTRONG & CO LITHO COR OF CONGRESS & FRANKLIN STS BOSTON

*On the Bright Shores of Gold, music sheet cover, 1874, lithograph by J. E. Baker*



# "PAPA DON'T DRINK ANY MORE."



WRITTEN by  
ARTHUR W. FRENCH.



MUSIC by  
CHAS. D. BLAKE.

BOSTON

Published by G.D. RUSSELL & COMPANY, 126 Tremont opp. Park St

PROVIDENCE, R.I.  
CORY BROS

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SAN FRANCISCO,  
M. GRAY.

Approved by the Copyright Commission

- *Papa Don't Drink Any More*. The lithograph for the cover of the song was drawn on stone by J. E. Baker;
- *Winter*, a colorful skating scene published by F. Gleason, Boston.

#### 1875–1887

- *Atlantic Portraits*, among the most important of the black & white lithographs produced by Armstrong & Co. The set was announced as life-size portraits of illustrious American writers who had been contributors to the *Atlantic Monthly*: Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, Emerson, and Hawthorne. All but one of the original seven were drawn on stone by J. E. Baker. Gerard Klucken drew the Emerson portrait. Chominski later drew additional stones for portraits of four of the authors.

#### 1875

- *Centennial America*, a lithotint which decoratively squeezed the whole history of the United States into a print 21" x 28½";
- *Trees and Shrubs in the Forests of Massachusetts*, thirty-three color lithographs from drawings by Isaac Sprague, illustrating the book of this title by George B. Emerson.

#### 1876

- Portrait of President Hayes for cover of *The Grand Centennial Celebration March*.

#### 1877–1878

- *Upland Game Birds and Water Fowl*, twenty chromos from watercolor sketches by Alexander Pope, Jr., Boston artist and sportsman. This was the first important set of color lithographs produced by Armstrong & Co. Steam presses printed the twenty lithographs in editions of 2000–3000. The prints were accompanied by informative sheets for sportsmen. They were published by the New York concern of Scribner, Armstrong & Co. (not to be confused with Charles Armstrong), later Charles Scribner's

Sons. Scribner's had sought out Armstrong & Co. and continued to commission color work from them for twenty years.

#### 1878

- *Professor Fowler, Phrenologist*, a large portrait drawn by Baker and printed with advertisements for the professor's lectures and consultations.

#### 1878–1881

- *Game Fishes of the United States*, chromolithographs from watercolor sketches by S. A. Kilbourne, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. The set of twenty fishes and a map showing the geographical distribution of game fishes in Eastern North America won prizes for the publishers and was praised in British and American publications.

#### 1879

- *The City of Boston*, a large birdseye view of the city;
- *The Ferns of North America*: for a book of this title in two volumes by D. C. Eaton, eighty-one color illustrations from drawings by J. H. Emerton and C. E. Faxon were lithographed;
- *The Wild Flowers of America*, fifty plates in color from watercolors by Isaac Sprague. These were first published by Estes & Lauriat of Boston and accompanied by a text by George L. Goodale, M.D., of Harvard. S. E. Cassino had the copyright and later published the work as a book which still later was republished by Bradley Whidden, Boston.

Charles Armstrong established a Life Class for artists and apprentices at Armstrong & Co. The class, meeting two or three times a week to draw in charcoal, was led by Theodore Basili Chominski, a sketch artist at the firm.

#### 1880

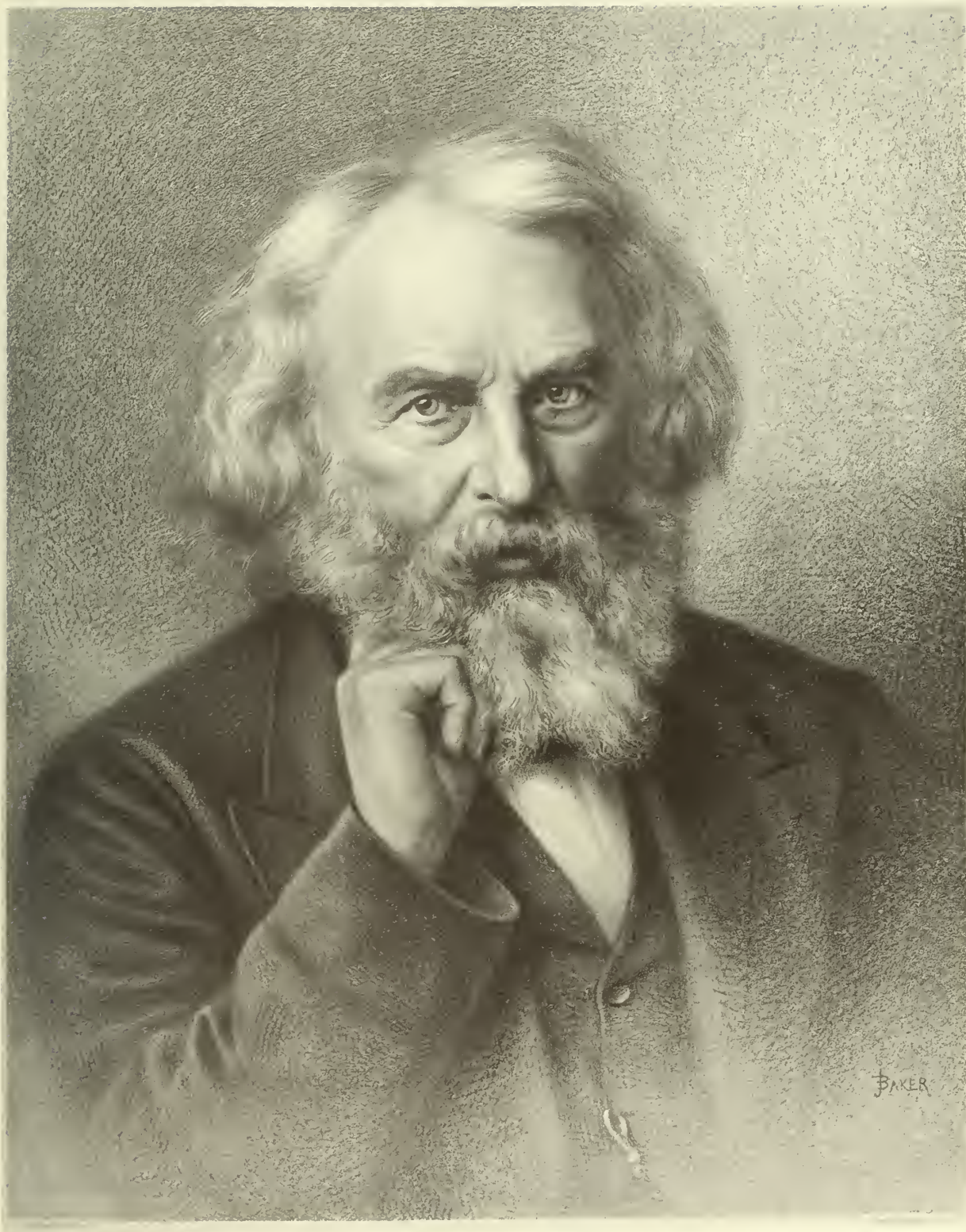
- *The Bright Side*, a chromolithograph copy of a Winslow Homer painting. The Civil War scene





*Winter*, chromolithograph drawn on stone by J. E. Baker, 1874





*The Atlantic Portraits: Longfellow, 1876, lithograph by Armstrong & Co.,  
the portrait being drawn from life directly on stone by Joseph E. Baker*



*Upland Game Birds and Water Fowl of the United States, 1877-78, lithographed in color by Armstrong & Co. from watercolor sketches by A. Pope, Jr.: No. 4, Mallard*

was owned by Lawson Valentine, a partner in Houghton Mifflin & Co.;

- *The Celebrated Dogs of America*, twenty color lithographs of prize-winning dogs, imported and native, from watercolors by A. Pope, Jr. Published by S. E. Cassino, the set was sold through agents to subscribers.

#### 1881-1882

- *Celebrated Horses*, twenty-four chromolithographs of famous horses “from paintings by the best artists,” published by E. K. Dunbar & Co., Boston;
- *The Trouvelot Astronomical Drawings*, fifteen color lithographs after drawings in pastel by E. L. Trouvelot of the Observatory at Harvard. Professor Trouvelot based his pastels on obser-

ventions with the naked eye and through telescopes. The huge lithographs, accompanied by a descriptive manual and key, were published by Scribner’s.

#### 1882

- *The Boston Tea Party*, a book written by Josephine Pollard, published by Dodd, Mead & Co., N.Y., and illustrated with chromolithographs after watercolors by H. W. McVickar.

#### 1883

- *Trotters*, two chromolithographs of pairs of trotting horses with drivers, after paintings by Scott Leighton. The chromos were published by E. K. Dunbar & Co., Boston;





*The Celebrated Dogs of America, Imported and Native*, 1880, lithographed in color by Armstrong & Co. from watercolor paintings by A. Pope, Jr.:  
Plate 5, *Champion Black and Tan Setter: Grouse and Bee*

- *Flower-de-Luce*, a small book reproducing in facsimile Longfellow's poem illustrated with color lithographs from watercolors by Isaac Sprague;
- *Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle*, the poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes, published as a book by Dodd, Mead & Co., N.Y., with thirty chromolithographs from pen and ink sketches by H. W. McVickar.

#### 1883–1888

- Calendars: color lithograph portraits of American writers for a series of literary calendars, some with quotations from the author for each day of the year.

#### 1884

- *American Yachts*, twenty-seven chromolithographs from watercolor sketches by Frederick S. Cozzens. The set was accompanied by a volume of text by J. D. Jerrold Kelley, Lt., U.S. Navy, and was published by Charles Scribner's Sons, N.Y. In all the plates the ropes and rigging were drawn on stone by Armstrong himself, and Plate XX was mainly drawn by him. More than one hundred yachts are pictured, including Armstrong's small sloop, *Countess*, shown in Plate XXII.

#### 1885

Armstrong & Co. suffered loss of business from

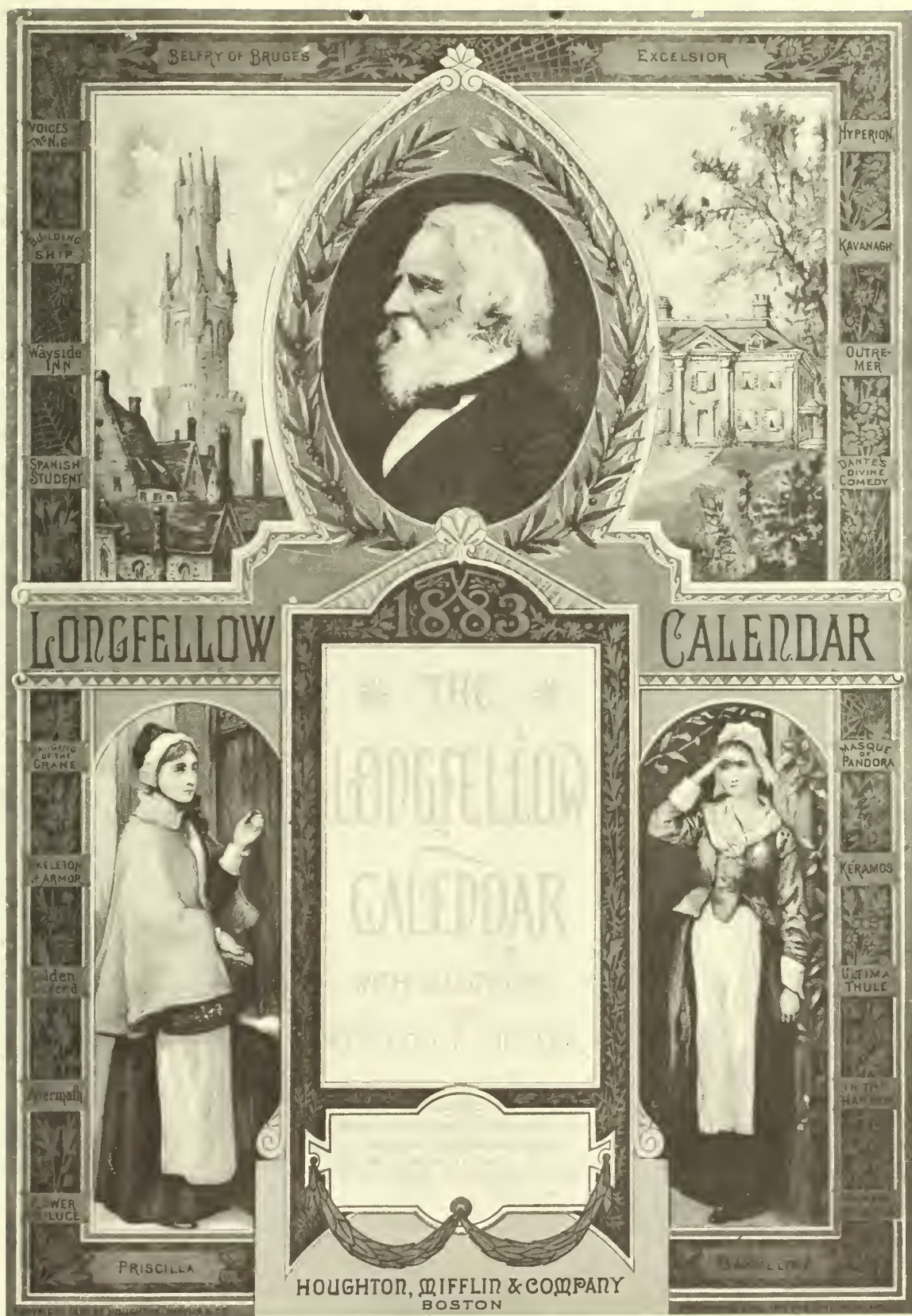


PLATE 749

PURPLE AZALEA  
AZALEA NUDIFLORA

*The Wild Flowers of America, 1879: Purple Azalea, chromolithograph  
after a watercolor by Isaac Sprague*





Longfellow Calendar, chromolithograph, 1880s





*Game Fishes of the United States*, lithographed in color by Armstrong & Co. from watercolor sketches by S. A. Kilbourne: Plate 10, *The Squeteague or Weakfish*, 1880, on stone by Hoefeldt and E. Boyd Smith





Three scenes (above and opposite) from *The Boston Tea Party December 1773*, drawn by H. W. McVickar  
with text by Josephine Pollard (Dodd, Mead & Co., 1882)





*The Boston Tea Party December 1773, drawn by H. W. McVickar  
with text by Josephine Pollard (Dodd, Mead & Co., 1882)*



A pair of trotters, chromolithograph by Armstrong & Co. after Scott Leighton, c. 1883

*People's Literary Companion* which changed its numerous illustrations from lithographs to oleographs.

c. 1886

- *Maud Powell*. This large black and white lithograph of a popular violinist may possibly have been made by Arthur Boos, a deaf and dumb sketch artist at the firm.

1887

Armstrong & Co. moved into the large, new, and electrified lithographic building constructed at Riverside Press. Charles Armstrong became a United States citizen.

c. 1887

- *Birth of Cupid*, a set of four small color lithographs from engravings in black and white done in 1796 by F. W. Tomkins. The set was printed together using fifteen stones. Scenes and figures were drawn on stone by Gerard Klucken and elaborate ornamental borders in stipple and brush by Ackerman who was considered the best ornamental stippler in the country at that time.

1888

Charles Bailey of Armstrong & Co. became Executive Secretary of new union known as Boston Lithographic Artists Association.





*American Yachts*, 1884, lithographed in color by Armstrong & Co.  
from watercolor sketches by Frederic S. Cozzens, Plate VII,  
*In the Narrows—A Black Squall*. Active, Dora, Rambler, Wanderer

1890

- *Children*, a set of twelve chromolithographs after watercolors by Maud Humphrey, published by Frederick A. Stokes and Brother;
- *Our Great Actors*, a set of six full-length portraits in costume of leading actors, lithographed in color and published by Estes & Lauriat.

1891–1892

- *Regional Anatomy in Its Relation to Medicine and Surgery*, two volumes by George McClellan, M.D., published by J. B. Lippincott Co., containing ninety-seven full-page color lithographs drawn on stone from original photographs taken and hand-colored by McClellan.

1891

- *Oliver Optic's Annual*, a children's book with a colorful cover lithographed by Armstrong & Co.

1892

- *Famous Adventures and Prison Escapes of the Civil War*, a color lithographic poster published by The Century Co.

1892–1893

- *Old Naval Prints*, twenty-four chromolithographs after watercolors by Frederick S. Cozzens to illustrate the book *Our Navy, Its Growth and Achievements* by J. D. Jerrold Kelley, U.S.N.





*Maud Powell*, American violinist (1868–1920), lithograph, 1885–86,  
by Armstrong & Co., signed in the print A.B.





*Our Great Actors*, 1890: Lawrence Barrett as Count Lanciotto in *Francesca Da Rimini* (chromolithograph)



*Our Great Actors*, 1890: Coquelin as Mascarille in *Précieuses Ridicules* (chromolithograph)



*Our Great Actors*, 1890: Edwin Booth in the title role of Richelieu (chromolithograph)

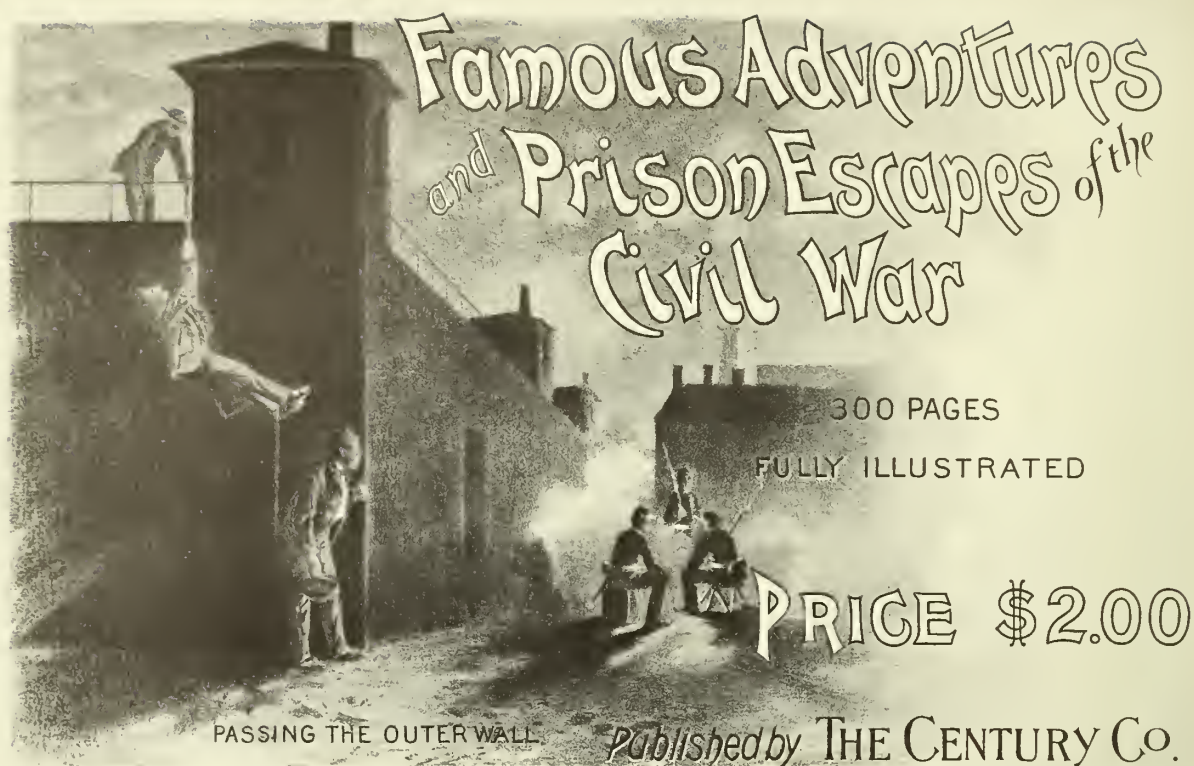
# OLIVER OPTIC'S ANNUAL



1891

*Oliver Optic's Annual, 1891: chromo cover by Armstrong & Co. for children's book by William Taylor Adams*





*Famous Adventures and Prison Escapes of the Civil War,*  
poster advertising the book, 1892 (color lithograph)

1893

- *The Song of the Ancient People*, a book by Edna Dean Proctor containing eleven chromolithographs reduced from original aquatints of Julian Scott. Copyrighted by Hemenway Southwestern Archaeological Expedition, the book was published by Houghton Mifflin & Co.;
- *The World's Fair, Chicago*, a set of at least four chromolithographs after paintings by various artists, copyrighted by Hubert H. Bancroft;
- Trade Cards for Quaker Oats: twelve chromolithographs comparing old and new methods of farming. Following watercolors by H. Bolton Jones and Francis C. Jones, the cards were used at the Chicago World's Fair;
- *Ole Bull*. Charles Armstrong drew this portrait from a sketch by F. O. C. Darley for a memoir of the violinist by Sara C. Bull;

- *A Russian Cossack*, a chromolithograph drawn on stone by Charles Armstrong and Frank B. Hawley from a watercolor by Frederick Remington for *American Illustrators* by F. Hopkinson Smith, published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

1894

- *An Island Garden*. Celia Thaxter's book of this name contains twelve chromolithographs after paintings by Childe Hassam along with headpieces for each chapter. The work was reviewed enthusiastically by *The Atlantic*.

1895–1897

- *The Fishes of North America*. Armstrong & Co. did sixteen in this set of chromolithographs from paintings by John L. Petrie.



*A Russian Cossack*, chromolithograph after Frederick Remington  
for F. Hopkinson Smith's *American Illustrators*, 1893 (Part Two)



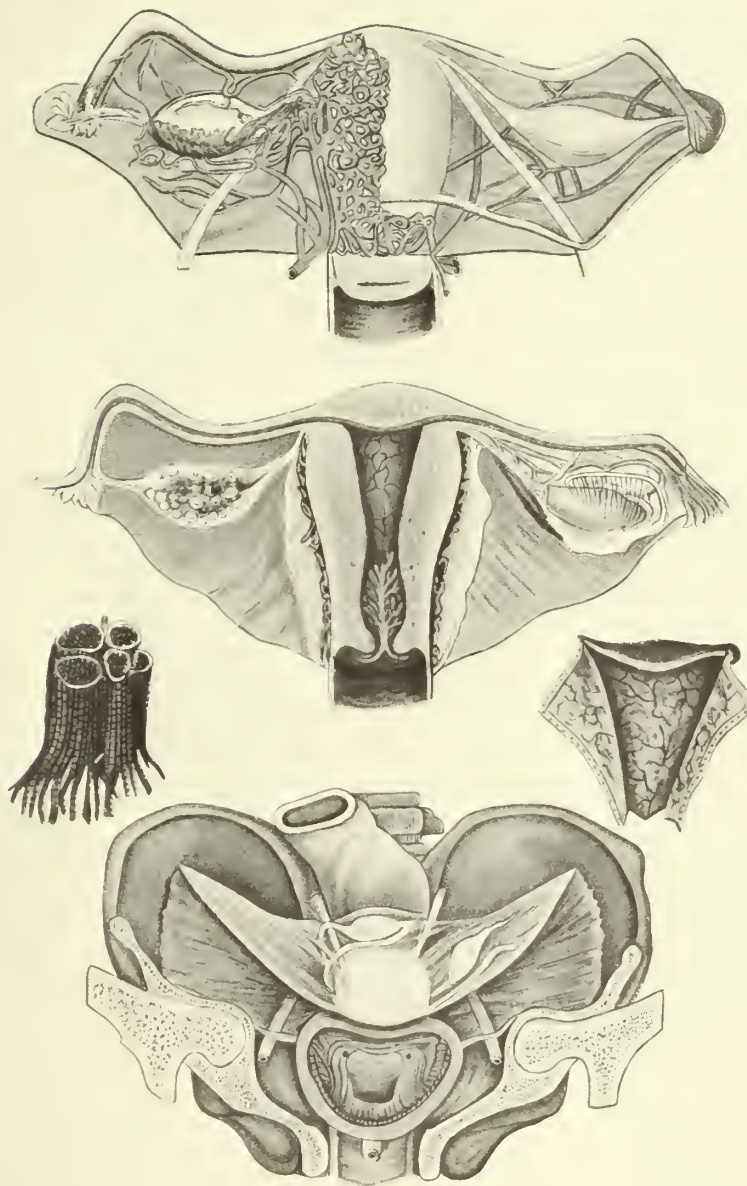
*Old Naval Prints, 1893, after paintings by Fred S. Cozzens, Plate 19: Concord, Stilleto, Columbia*



*Old Naval Prints, 1893, after paintings by Fred S. Cozzens, Plate 22: Raleigh, Castine, Maine*



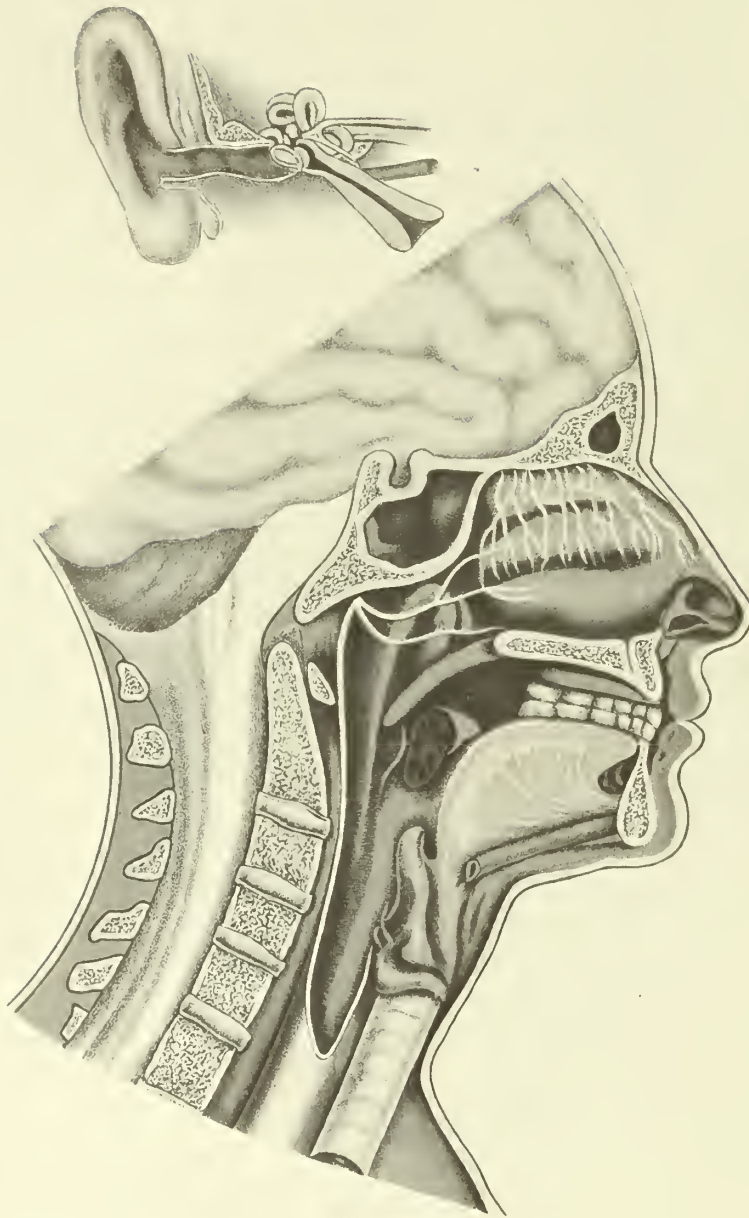
PLATE II



COPYRIGHTED

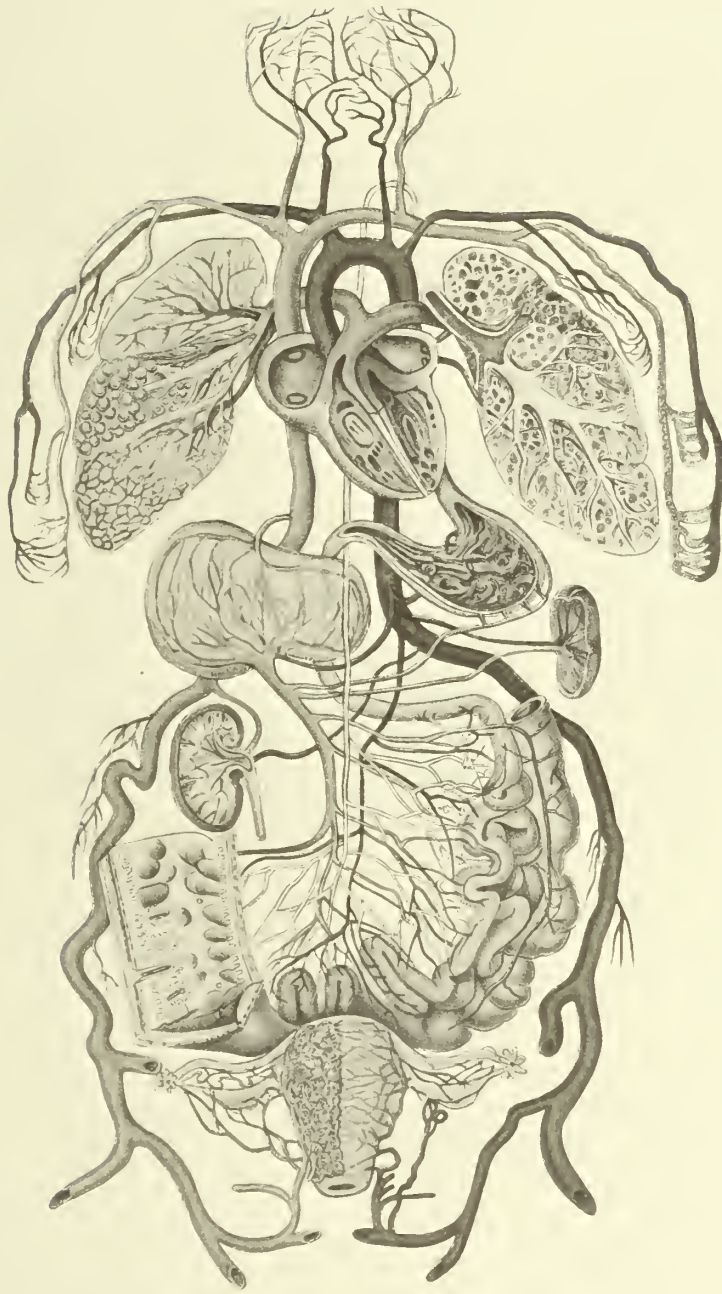
Lithograph in color by Armstrong & Co. after painting by William J. Kaula,  
from the illustrations to *Surgical Pathology and Therapeutics*  
by John Collins Warren, M.D., 1895

PLATE VIII



Lithographs (above and opposite) in color by Armstrong & Co. after paintings by William J. Kaula, from the illustrations to *Surgical Pathology and Therapeutics* by John Collins Warren, M.D., 1895

PLATE I



COPYRIGHTED





*Shooting Pictures*, 1896, from the original watercolors by A. B. Frost:  
*Shooting Ducks from a Blind*, on stone by Charles Armstrong and Frank B. Hawley

#### 1895

- *Old Virginia*, a chromolithographic poster designed by J. M. Flagg advertising a book by John Fiske;
- *Venetian Scenes*, a set of four chromolithographs after watercolors by F. Hopkinson Smith. Charles Armstrong drew the stone for *Off San Pietro Di Capello*;
- *Surgical Pathology and Therapeutics*. The book by John Collins Warren was illustrated with chromolithographs from watercolors by William J. Kaula.

#### 1896

- *Shooting Pictures*. At least six prints in this set were lithographed in color by Armstrong & Co. after watercolors by A. B. Frost. At first

some of the pictures were sent out to be done by others because of the reduced staff at Armstrong's, a result of the severe business depression of the nineties. Armstrong had to rework some of those chromos to bring them up to his and Frost's high standards. The remainder were all done by artists at Armstrong & Co. Charles Scribner's Sons had selected Armstrong & Co. because of their satisfaction with the company's work on earlier sets, and, when this set was complete, stated that they were "the most perfect specimens of color reproduction of their kind ever executed";

- *Cape Cod*. The book by Henry Thoreau published in two volumes by Houghton Mifflin & Co., was illustrated in the margin with numerous chromolithographs after small informal watercolors made by one of the book's readers.



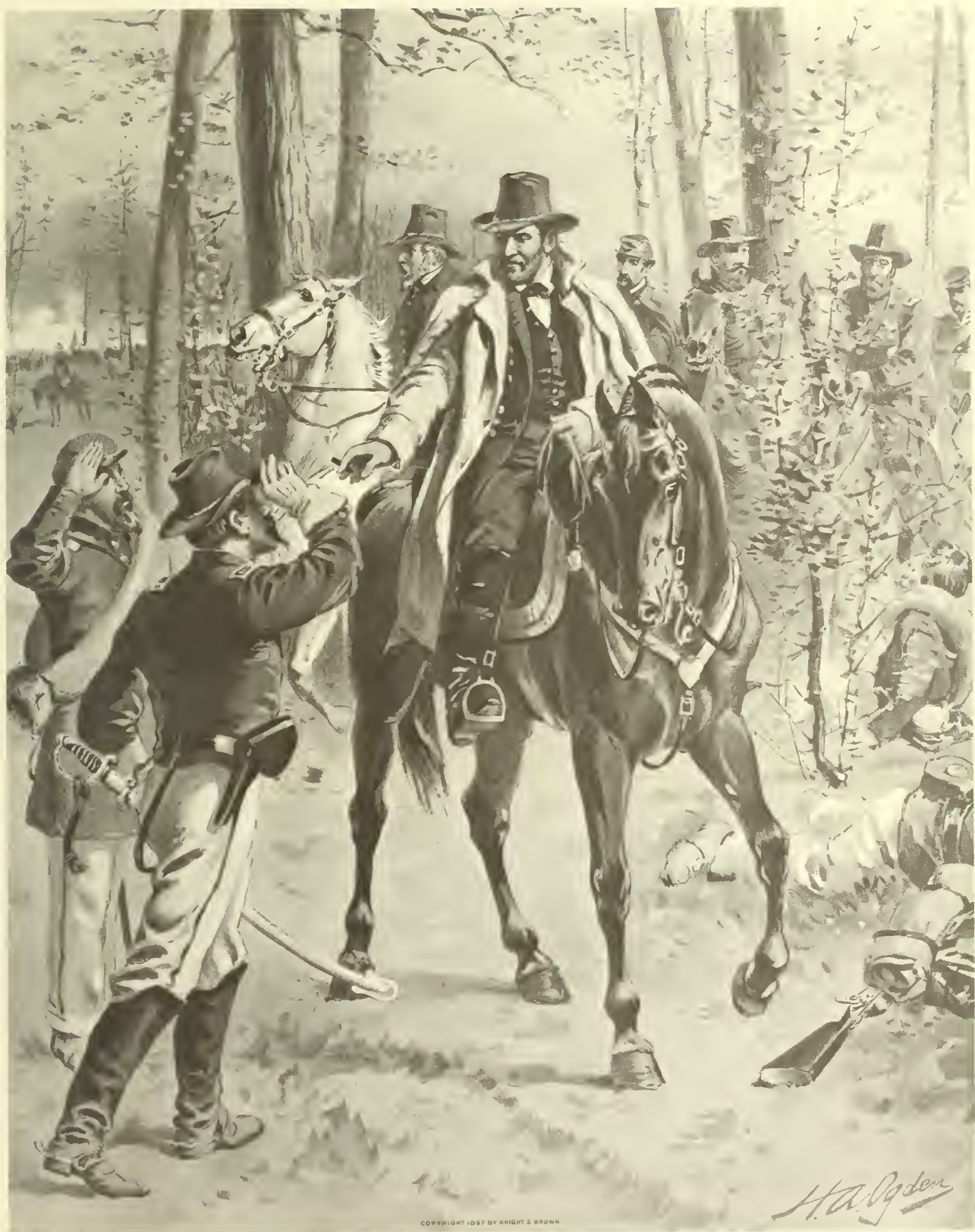
Civil War Set, 1897, after paintings by H. A. Ogden: *Meade at Gettysburg*





Civil War Set, 1897, after paintings by H. A. Ogden: *McClellan at Antietam*





Civil War Set, 1897, after paintings by H. A. Ogden: *Grant in the Wilderness*



*Symphony Bon Bons*, trade card, c. 1900, on stone by Frank B. Hawley (Armstrong-Moore Co.)

1897

- *Evangeline*, the poem by Longfellow was published as a book by Houghton Mifflin & Co. and illustrated with ten lithographs after paintings by Violet Oakley and Jesse Wilcox Smith;
- *Army Set*: eight chromolithographs of Civil War scenes after paintings by H. A. Ogden, copyrighted by Knight & Brown;
- *Old Man Sitting in Chair*. Armstrong, who had always imported his lithographic stones from Bavaria, was considering investing in a quarry in Canada as an alternative source. He sent his stone grinder and grainer in whom he had great confidence to inspect the stones and had a young artist, Warnock, of the firm make this lithograph to try the stone. The print states, "This impression is from a Drawing made by us to the Canadian stone. . . ." The result was unsatisfactory and the project was dropped.

Armstrong & Co. merged with Moore Lithographic Mfg. Co. and continued under the name

Armstrong-Moore Co. The majority of the work done by the new company was commercial.

1901

Geo. H. Walker & Co., maker of maps and music covers, acquired control but the business was continued as Armstrong-Moore Co., though at Walker's address in Boston. Among Boston lithographic firms only W. H. Forbes & Co. survived the nineties to continue in the same field under the same name.

c. 1904

Charles Armstrong retired from Armstrong-Moore Co. A job as Art Examiner at South Kensington Museum School, London, was suggested, but he decided to settle with his son in New Hampshire.

1906

Charles Armstrong died.

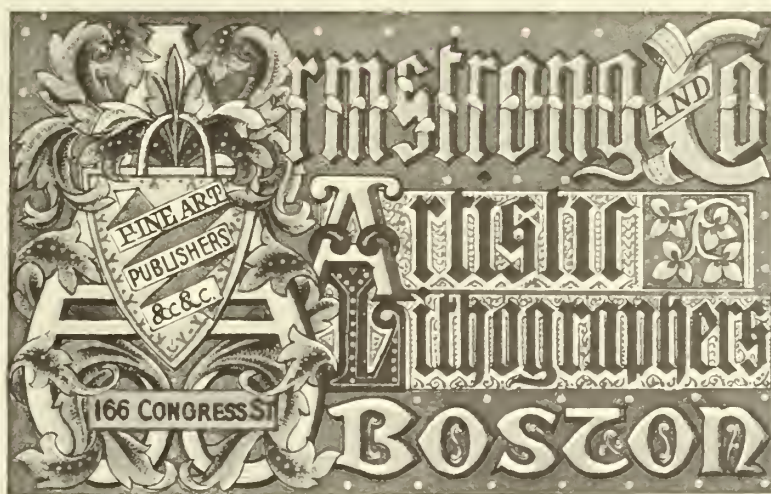


## The Lithographic Artists at Armstrong's

Such were the lithographs of Armstrong & Co. Perhaps something can be added to our appreciation of these lithographs by a description of the surroundings in which they were prepared in this period when lithography was starting on mass production but was still more an art than a business.

We know little of the early years from 1872 to 1874 when Armstrong & Co. was located at various addresses in Boston but by the end of 1874 or early 1875 the concern had become established in Cambridge in Daye Court where it was to remain for the next dozen years. Daye Court, located close to the meandering Charles, had an antique flavor. It was named after that Stephen Daye who in Cambridge had set up the first print-

ing press in the country. The buildings in this court were small cottages heated by stoves and without a trace of plumbing, unspoilt by paint and maintaining themselves, as they had for years before, without the benefit of electricity. Whether these surroundings had a Bohemian flavor or foreign quaintness which was conducive to lithography or whether the artists were so absorbed in their work that atmosphere had little effect upon them, we do not know, but we do know that it was in several of these old cottages that many of Armstrong & Co.'s finest lithographic accomplishments were completed during these twelve years. The artists' cottage contained a cosmopolitan group. There by 1878 were D. C. Fabronius, a Belgian; Dubois, a Frenchman; three Germans



Trade card (chromolithograph, 1872)



—Schurtz, Haas, and Hoefeldt; the two Kluckens, born in Italy—half Italian and half German; E. Boyd Smith, a Canadian; Chominsky from Polish Russia; Joseph Baker, an American; all these headed by Armstrong, an Englishman. Here in a medley of languages (Chominsky didn't bother, for some years to learn English as his supply of French, Italian, and German served all purposes) and with good natured banter, they labored together during working hours and played chess, wrestled, or sang songs during the long noon hour. Old Dubois, a French lithographer who had been at Bufford's, would at odd moments look up from the stone on which he was drawing with meticulous attention, glance at the bare walls of the old cottage and remark, "This is too luxy," which served not only as a summary of their surroundings but by force of repetition came to have a humor of its own. D. C. Fabronius, near the end of a long and successful career in Belgium, France, Italy, England, and this country, would be glad to stop work on some chromo, perhaps to explain the French lithographic methods he had learnt in his youth or perhaps to expatiate on the derivation and relative effectiveness of expletives in the various languages with which he was familiar. (Once when the language of some later lithographers became too luxuriant, Armstrong appointed the worst offenders a Committee for the Reduction of Profanity in the Artists' Room.) Charlie Weis, a lithographer who had started as a letter artist at Charles H. Crosby and Co.'s, was always ready to enliven the artists' room, as when he reported that his sister, after years of effort, had gotten him to church one Sunday, only to have his high hat disappear during the service, something which, as he told her in a loud voice for the benefit of the surrounding parishioners, had not happened to him in visits to hundreds of bar-rooms.

When in 1887 it became necessary for the artists to abandon the dingy but informal surroundings of Daye Court for the elaborate, electrically lighted, new Lithographic Building, Charles H.

Bailey felt driven to verse and penned "The Lithographers' Lament".

Farewell! Ye pictured walls of old;  
Farewell! Though still we fondly hold  
Thy memory dear.  
And for the good times that are past,  
'Tis sad to think they cannot last;  
We drop a silent tear.

No more the merry jokes go round;  
No more the trembling walls resound  
With laughter gay.  
While whistling and harmonicas  
With songs from favorite operas,  
Resound all day.

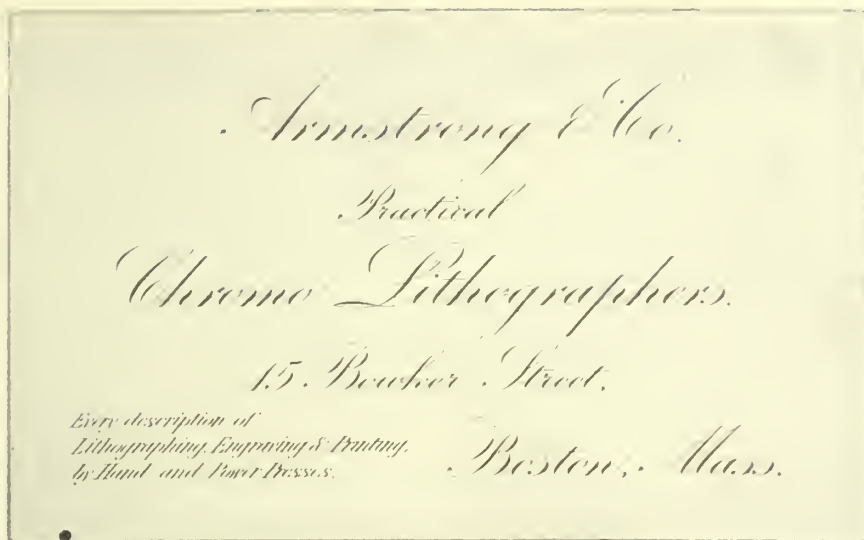
And wrestling forms we hear no more  
Go reeling o'er the crayoned floor  
In straining clasp;  
And crashing gainst the farther wall,  
Come to the floor with heavy fall,  
And breathless gasp.  
While dropping knife and pen in wonder,  
As the walls shake with thunder  
Of their strife;  
We rush to see who was the victim,  
And to see the one who licked him,  
Big as life.

Never more above the portals,  
Water waits deluded mortals  
Entering there.  
While we think how he will holler  
When the water strikes his collar  
And he'll swear.

No more we'll light the corncob pipe  
Or cigarette or cherished "snipe,"  
Or clay T.D.  
No more to heaven the smoke ascends  
For now alas that pleasure ends  
For you and me.

Then leave the old shop for the new  
Where work is plenty, pleasures few  
And smoking none.  
And in these few and ill penned rhymes  
We bid farewell to good old times  
Our work is done.

In spite of this lament all was not changed in the new quarters. Practical jokes continued on an unrestrained scale as when one day a newly ar-



Armstrong & Co. trade card in black and white



Joseph E. Baker  
(photograph)

rived lithographer was called into the sketch artists' room to see his gold headed cane floating away in the Charles River which flowed below the windows. The joke completed, they then proceeded to draw in the cane by a thin black thread which they had tied to it, only to have the thread break and the cane really float away, an unintentional result which doubled the joke in the opinion of the participants if not of the owner.

Some apprentices used to arrive on high bicycles, others on the horse cars from Boston—Armstrong used to come on horseback in the early days and later always drove a spirited horse. John Kennedy, who began his apprenticeship in 1882, recalls being driven to Boston by Armstrong and then given the unwelcome task of driving one of these horses back to Cambridge which, as he and the horse were not in full understanding as to signals, resulted in his wheeling into Daye Court at breakneck speed to an enthusiastic welcome from the horse-loving artists.

There was a boat club nearby and not far away across the river was Beacon Park, a trotting course, where Armstrong and, when they could arrange it, the others went to observe the trotters which they had lithographed for the "Celebrated Horses of America." Achilles Klucken and others used to

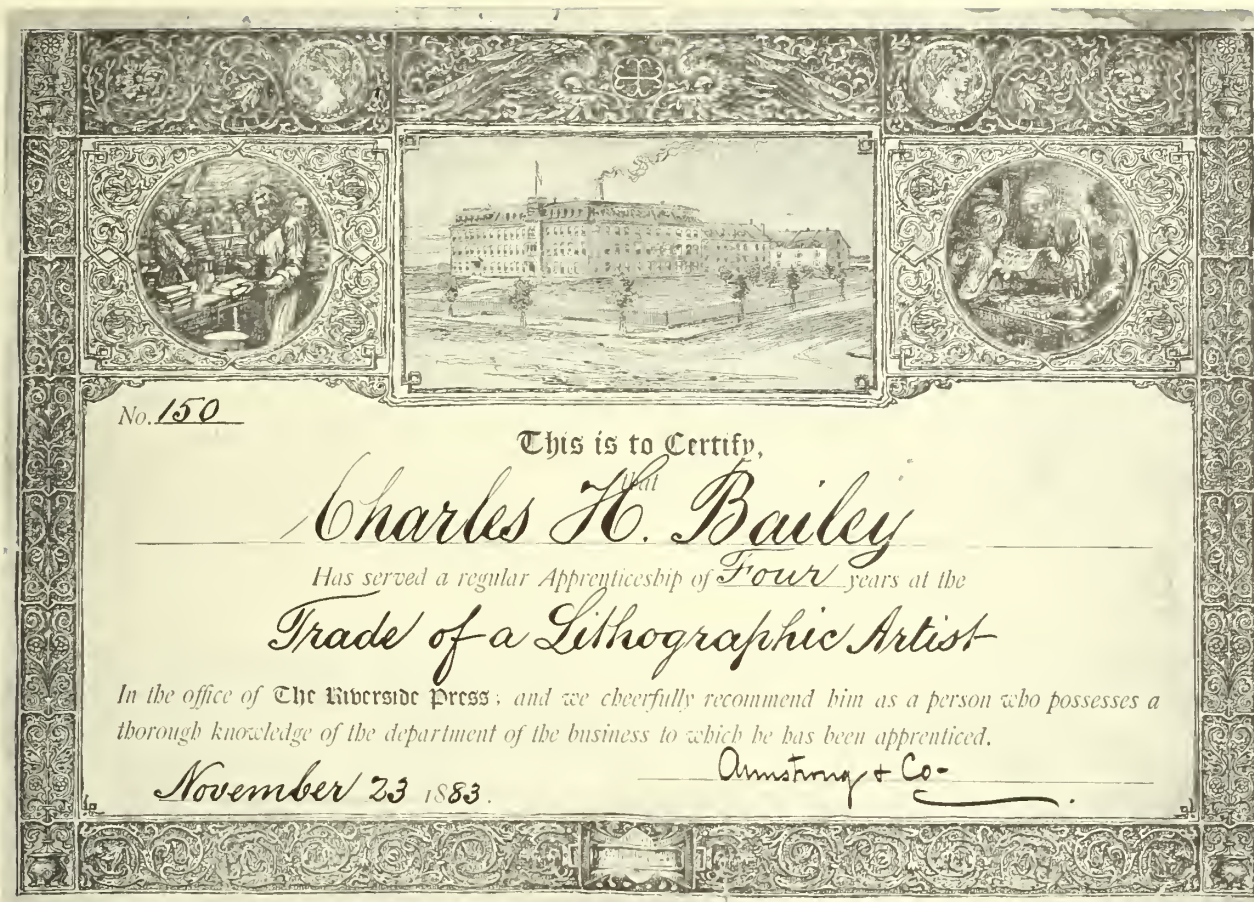
arrive at an early hour in the morning and go out on the Charles peep shooting, before coming to work—an early morning practice which Winslow Homer also engaged in when a lithographic artist at Bufford's. As a result, the lithographing of Pope's "Game Birds and Water Fowl" was entered upon enthusiastically as were the other sporting prints at Armstrong's. Armstrong had his own small yacht, which appears in one of the Cozzens' Yacht lithographs, and he never missed attending the International Races.

Armstrong was not the only one to enjoy boating. Of a summer's day the word might go around, "It's a fine day." Without more, one of the apprentices went off to get beer and sandwiches and then the artists all set out in the sailboat owned by Ralph Klucken which was kept anchored nearby. No thought was given to the amount of work which the firm had to complete, perhaps at a nearby date. They spent the day sailing up the Charles and picnicking on the bank. They felt this a prerogative to which the artistic spirit entitled them and they were confident that Armstrong, as



A lithographic artist at work at Armstrong & Co. in Daye Court, Cambridge, about 1885  
(sketch made by Charles H. Bailey in his 80th year. Bailey began  
his apprenticeship with Armstrong & Co. in Daye Court in 1879)





Certificate of completion of apprenticeship in the trade  
of a lithographic artist, for Charles H. Bailey

an artist and yachtsman, would sympathize with them.

Individually, as well as en masse, the artists might disappear for days at a time. This too was accepted as part of the penalty of trying to regiment artists, but when they took the lithographic stones with them to work on at home and then were not heard from for days a problem was sometimes presented to meet deliveries, and the city had to be searched high and low by some fellow artist. One—in this case with permission—would take Friday afternoons off to attend the Boston Symphony; he was studying the violin. Sometimes the lithographic artist was permitted to do much of his work at home. An apprentice would bring him the work and then return it to

the shop when completed. Although depicting the evils of drink in lithographs, the artists did not always take these lessons to heart and many were the stories of barroom prowess. One, more serious than the rest, sought to cure himself on various occasions by entering an institution in Boston which, in addition to wrestling with the Demon Rum, cared for certain mental ailments. Here, too, an apprentice would bring the stones and the lithographic drawing would emerge in spite of strange surroundings among those who lived in a world of imagination rather than depicting it. With all these individual problems, it called for considerable tact to hold together a group of capable artists.

As E. Boyd Smith recalls—he was at Arm-



Armstrong's, 1885 (Charles Weiss, William Hallback and C. A. Farrar) (photograph)

strong's before 1878—"we took ourselves quite seriously as artists." This outlook led to a Life Class which was a purely voluntary undertaking by the artists established in 1879. The class met two or three times a week and drew life studies in charcoal. In the early years the studio was in Cambridge, the first one being rented from a minister. This led to some complications and a curt notice to quit when neighbors complained to the minister. It is not surprising that he should have acted promptly on this complaint: what is surprising is that he should have withdrawn the notice to quit when the artists explained to him their serious purpose of improving their art by sketching from life. In spite of the continued suspicions of his parishioners he allowed them to remain for four years, which showed some courage in a period when public opinion forced the head of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts to remove a display of photographs of famous paintings because some were of nudes. Failing with the minister, the neighbors next went to the police who, after an appropriate investigation, were soon convinced that artistic development should not be unduly restrained. Perhaps these suspicions in Victorian Cambridge may have been accentuated by the attractiveness of one of the models. She was considered the most desirable model Boston had ever had and she was

soon posing for the leading Boston artists. The fame of her perfection spread much further after a series of photographs of her taken one Sunday in the studio under Chominski's direction. These were in demand for many years afterwards by artists and sculptors not only in this country but all over Europe. Unfortunately success after she left the Life Class was too much for her and she died of consumption before she was twenty-five.

The Life Class was under the instruction of Chominski. Theodore Basili Chominski was a man of aristocratic countenance and Bohemian tastes with real artistic ability and a colorful character. He was from Russian Poland and had had an excellent art training in Europe before coming to Armstrong's. He was a friend of Adamowski of the Boston Symphony and of Gaugengigl the Boston artist. In the course of assisting Gaugengigl in illustrating an edition of Dickens' *Christmas Carol*, Chominski climbed the high iron fence surrounding Mt. Auburn Cemetery one snowy night, explaining that he wished to get the feeling for his illustration of Scrooge's grave. His lithographs at Armstrong's were few, the second Longfellow portrait in 1884 and the second Whittier portrait in 1887, both large black and whites. That he was unaccustomed to drawing on stone is seen in his signature which appears in reverse on these lithographs; a lithographer must draw in reverse on the stone to avoid this result. Most of his work at Armstrong's was as a sketch artist who drew illustrations or painted pictures to be copied by the lithographic artists. Also, in the evenings he did book illustrating for others. His importance at Armstrong's was because of the spread of his artistic influence as instructor of the Life Class.

Armstrong himself often attended these Life Classes the first year and thereafter always appeared at the Gala Spring Dinner in the studio which was preceded by sketches not only of the current model but also of the jovial proprietor of the Prospect House nearby who served the dinner. Chominski used to say that he never had seen



anyone who could get the swing of a figure so accurately and quickly as Armstrong. This is not surprising in view of his long training in art in London where he had won a Victoria medal at the Marlborough House Normal School in 1854 with a charcoal drawing—a Life Study. Armstrong's few surviving sketch books show a ready pencil in numerous fields—landscapes, marines, figures, and animals. Some of his early black and white lithographs done while in London have an Ingres surety and clarity. After he had started his own firm, little in the black and white field can be identified as Armstrong's own work but there is one which Charles H. Bailey, apprenticed to Armstrong, recalls that Armstrong drew personally on stone, from the original by F. O. C. Darley. This is

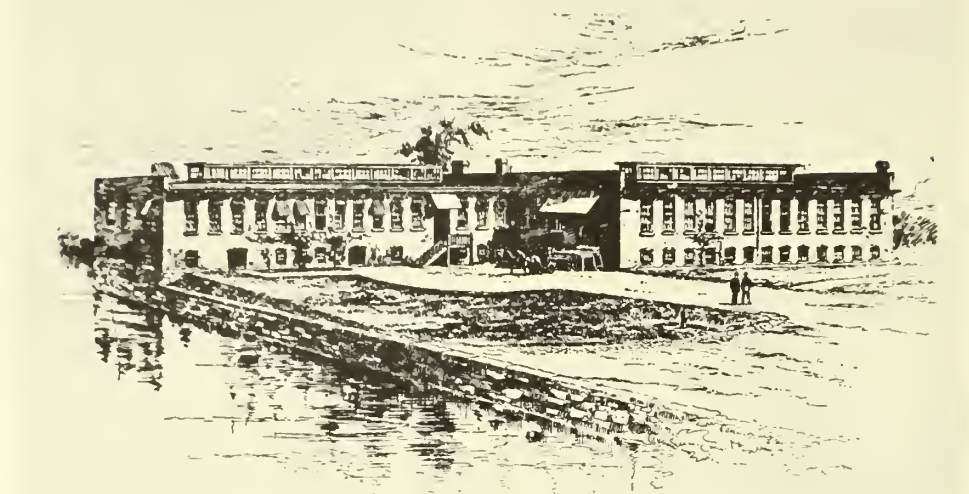
the charming sketch of Ole Bull the violinist, the "rapt musician" of Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. This was an illustration for a book on Ole Bull by his wife published in 1893. It took an artist to reproduce this free hand on stone, thus preserving its original freshness and life which could not have been done by a tracing or other mechanical means. Though perhaps not attaining to Armstrong's own ability, the training in free-hand drawing at the Life Class was of value to the other lithographers in maintaining the quality of lithographic work at Armstrong & Co.'s.

In later years the Life Class moved to Boston for a time after one of their models, following a trip to Turkey, returned with a large collection of costumes (which appears hardly necessary) and



Staff of Armstrong & Company including Paul Harvey, Charles Heil, Hellback, Frizzell, Odenweller, Trinité, Souter, Fault, Mathus, Ackerman, Weiss (photograph)





New Lithographic Building, Riverside Press, Cambridge, about 1887

"The new lithographic building erected by the firm in 1887 merits description. Its presses are operated by the same engine which drives the machinery in the main building, an underground shaft in a tunnel connecting the two buildings, which are seventy-five feet apart. The new building is two hundred feet long by seventy-five feet in width for half its length, and forty-five feet in width for the remainder. It has a high basement and one lofty story lighted with monitor roof. On the principal floor are the artists, each provided with a private room amply lighted. Here also are the nine proving presses. The press-room adjoining contains six large steam lithographic presses, an immense paper-cutter, and the calendering machine. In the basement are the four thousand and more lithographic stones which are preserved for future use, ample sanitary arrangements, and all needed conveniences for the workmen and the workwomen. Here also is done the polishing of the stones to receive the drawings. Of course the larger part of the work done in the lithographic department is for outside patrons, of whom many are located in distant cities. On the day of his visit the writer found presses engaged in filling an order for one million circulars for one of the flour-mills at Minneapolis. The lithographic business is under the charge of Mr. Charles Armstrong, founder of the firm of Armstrong and Company, and for convenience that title is still retained in this department, although the firm of Armstrong and Company was merged in the firm of Houghton, Mifflin and Company in 1875. In this department, as in the publishing, printing, binding and electrotyping business that is conducted by the firm, success has been won because none but first-class workmanship is tolerated." (From *A Sketch of the Firm of Houghton Mifflin & Company Publishers*, printed at the Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1889; a separate opening page lists the independent departments of the firm: H. O. Houghton and Company, Armstrong and Company, and the Riverside Press.)

set up a studio where they and other artists could meet. While in Boston the class was attended by S. S. Frizzell, an excellent lithographic artist at Bufford's. Following these Boston meetings, the class would adjourn perhaps to a bowling alley or perhaps to a bar or restaurant. The burly figure of the noted Boston prize fighter, John L. Sullivan, was often seen on such occasions. While usually these evening excursions were peaceful, one night in a dispute at the Old Elm Tree Tavern Dominic Drummond with the same hand which at Crosby's had done portraits of Adeline Patti, Mozart, and Johann Strauss and at Armstrong's had drawn many posters, floored an eminent sculptor, Martin Milmore, whose large Army and Navy Monument had been erected in 1877 on the Common. The sculptor, while perhaps believing sculpture was entitled to greater weight than lithography, failed to make due allowance for the improbable fact that in this case the lithographer had started life as a blacksmith in Ireland and so could add considerable force to his argument. Others attended the theatre and one aroused the interest of a great tragedienne, Jenanshek, so that she gave him dramatic coaching with the result that he delighted his fellow lithographers on many an evening with readings from Shakespeare.

There was a certain vagueness about the hours at Armstrong's. The early morning was devoted to a review of the happenings of the preceding evening and the tales were many and redoubtable. E. Boyd Smith never set to work without first making sketches of sights of the night before—perhaps a wobbly sailor on the Common or an attractive actress on the stage. Gerard Klucken, although the head of the artists' room, was particularly loathe to arrive at a regular hour in the morning and once, when Armstrong decided to confront him at the door upon his late appearance, slipped in through a window and was innocently and industriously at work when found. In later years some effort was made to enforce regular hours and so a book was opened in which each one who was late was to sign and give his reasons.

Not considering such restraints befitting the artistic temperament, it became the custom for the first one late to give a reason and for the others merely to enter ditto marks beneath this. Armstrong enjoyed telling how one morning the first artist late had in fact a very good excuse and so noted in the book: "Wife had baby last night." Twelve artists were late that morning and all merely dittoed this explanation.

With all of this it is surprising that work was ever done, especially when it is recalled that much of the steady grist of work was for publications appearing at regular intervals. In one case the story is told of a customer dying before his lithograph was finished, an event which did not disturb the equanimity of the lithographer although leading to some business complications for Armstrong.

Against this heterogeneous background and these diverting interludes work proceeded at Armstrong's. Baker was the leader at Armstrong's, as he probably was in the country, in black and white portrait lithography, especially crayon work. We are told that only the most experienced lithographic artists are capable of doing real justice to this class of work, which calls for both delicacy and refinement. Baker was one of those. Joseph Pennell tells us he worked in lithography because he considered it the "only genuine form of multiplying autographic art" which the artist can see all the time. The lithographic artist in this field is not restricted by the medium in which he works and the texture, tone, and scale of the finished lithographs are all just as the artist drew them on the stone.

Baker is remembered by those who knew him, not only as a skilled artist of unusual ability and with a deep interest in art, but as a delightful companion—a brilliant conversationalist when the spirit moved him—always amiable and always a gentleman. His apprentice in the early years in Daye Court, who worked at the next table to him and mixed ink for Baker's use, recalls how Baker would sit on his high stool drawing in a leisurely

fashion on a large stone nearly upright before him. At frequent intervals he would stop, cross one leg over the other, jolly the young apprentice by his side for a few minutes and then immerse himself again in his drawing. As the demand for fine black and white lithographs declined before the flow of color, Baker turned to posters in which he once more asserted his leadership. He was never at home in color lithography which was then the coming field. In later years, when roughing out a design for a poster for Armstrong, Baker once remarked to a lithographic artist skilled in color work: "My style has gone by: yours will go some day," which was soon to prove true.

In addition to Baker, the versatile Gerard Klucken and the accomplished Chominski both did good black and white lithography at Armstrong's—large portraits in the Atlantic series.

D. C. Fabronius had been one of the leaders in the whole country in artistic black and white lithographs but he was well on in years when he joined Armstrong's about 1878. He no longer attempted the large black and white lithographs for which he was famous but confined himself to chromos, smaller color lithographs requiring perhaps eight or ten colors. An apprentice, who used to carry work to Fabronius at his room in the Prospect House in Cambridge where he did most of his work, recalls Fabronius's hand shook continuously with the palsy. He had the greatest difficulty in sharpening his crayon which had to be done with a knife cutting from the point of the crayon. Fabronius would then take the sharpened crayon in his shaking hand and guide his hand to the ruler, always used by lithographers to keep the moisture of the hand from touching the stone. From the moment his hand touched the ruler, his long years of training in France and of practice in England and in this country resulted in his regaining absolute and complete control of his hand. He did beautiful work and some of the lithographers who watched him still marvel at the delicacy of his crayon work.

Fabronius also did brush work on these chro-

mos, that is he drew his solid colors on the stone with a brush. For such brush work a greasy ink, called "tusche," was used by the lithographic artists. The duty of mixing this ink was imposed upon the newest apprentice. When Charles H. Bailey first arrived as an apprentice in 1879 he thought how kind it was of his predecessor, Ralph Klucken, to show him at once how to break the stick of tusche in a saucer and then rub in a little water until thoroughly dissolved. As there were eight or nine artists at this period for whom to mix the ink, he soon came to look upon this bit of instruction in a different light. The apprentices all looked favorably upon Fabronius because he followed the wholly orthodox method of merely wetting his brush and rubbing it on the stick of lithographic ink. In spite of this short cut, his great skill allowed him to produce just as good results by this method as others did whose ink was properly mixed by the apprentices.

Fabronius had been born in Belgium, had been trained in Paris, had lived in Italy and in England, and had been patronized by the nobility of those countries. His exhibits at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 included a portrait of the Duchess of Edinburgh done during this English period. He is said to have been related to Senefelder, the inventor of lithography. Fabronius's fine crayon work is not surprising in view of his French training, for France was famous at this period for finished black and white crayoning. These effects were the result of arduous and painstaking work over long periods. Fabronius would tell how in these early days, even though it might take six months to finish a stone, he would at the beginning of each day lightly go over all of his prior work with a crayon to assume uniformity. The fear was that if in the lengthy process he had finished one part of his stone first and then worked only on another part, the greasy ink of the crayon on the first would have dried more than on later parts and so in the final printing might give a slightly different effect. He also told how in France the stones were kept in a room of



even temperature to assure uniformity. The result of this long and painstaking work was extraordinary harmony and tone. The benefits of such a training are seen in such a fine lithograph as the "Bugler on Horseback" by Fabronius, done in this country in 1863, from a painting by William Morris Hunt, and in his lithograph of the portrait-loving minister Henry Ward Beecher "Drawn on stone by D. C. Fabronius."

The leading lithographic artist in color work at Armstrong's was Gerard A. Klucken. Gerard Klucken was considered one of the best reproducing lithographic artists of his time in this country, some say next to Charles Armstrong the best. Anyway, he ranked with the leaders in the color field. He could work with a broad sweep on large stones as for the Green Winged Teal in the Pope Game Bird set, or with minute delicacy as in the figures for the small and exquisite Birth of Cupid

set. Like Armstrong and Fabronius he favored the crayon, the method which gave the greatest artistic freedom in drawing on the stone. An example of his skill with the crayon is seen in his handling of the reflections in the Yellow Perch, a small fish with the tip of its tail and part of its head out of water, a red fly in his mouth, one of the Kilbourne Game Fish set. In this lithograph the light grey was an asphaltum tint, a method by which the highlights were protected at an early stage with asphaltum gum, so that the rest of the stone could be drawn on freely.

Gerard Klucken was the son of a German, Francisco H. Klucken. Francisco had left Germany at the age of fourteen, had set up as a lithographer in Marseilles, had served several years in the French Army fighting the Arabs in North Africa (all his days he carried a saber scar on his wrist as a remembrance), then had settled in Genoa where he



Armstrong & Company artists in a photograph of 1888 (rear row: R. Klucken, Kennedy, Hellback, Souter, Farrar, apprentice, Clark. Front row: Boos, Weiss, Choate, George)

had kept reasonably busy what with establishing a lithographic business, organizing eleven Masonic chapters in an effort to aid his friend Garibaldi, and marrying a Genoese. Six of his children were born in Genoa, including Gerard. Francisco had come to this country in 1866, the same year as Armstrong, and had gone to work in New York for the famous Napoleon Sarony. His family had joined him in 1868. Armstrong was a friend of Sarony's and through him first met Francisco Klucken, with the result that six of Francisco's seven sons were engaged in lithographic work at Armstrong & Co. at one time or another. As the father was one of the best vignette engravers on stone of his day, Gerard had been brought up to the work and served no formal apprenticeship. For a time he had a trade studio on School Street in Boston where he worked on stone for various lithographic concerns. He only did the work of a lithographic artist in this studio: after making the drawings on the stones, he would deliver them to the lithographic concern which had ordered the work and that concern would complete the lithograph by etching the stone and proving it. He did not maintain a regular trade office which at that time meant one equipped to etch the stone and prove it, so that a proof could be delivered to the customer. Gerard Klucken did work for Charles H. Crosby & Co. at this time including a portrait for the Folio of "Madame Peschka Lautner of Jubilee Fame" in 1872 and one in 1871 of the famous violinist Ole Bull, of whom Armstrong himself later lithographed a sketch. These portraits are signed "G. Klucken." A portrait of Annie Louise Cary in February 1871 initiated a series, the publishers of the Folio "which is acknowledged by the Press and Public to stand at the head of the Musical Journals of America," announcing in the same issue that they had "just made a contract with Messrs. C. H. Crosby & Co., the well known lithographers of Boston, to furnish every number of the Folio with a splendid portrait of some Celebrated Artist." Considering the importance of producing a "splendid" lithograph at

least once to justify this announcement, it was a compliment to have selected Klucken, then only twenty-one years old. The portraits are creditable, particularly that of Ole Bull, but they do not display the freedom, facility, and feeling of Baker's portraits.

It may have been from his trade studio in School Street that Klucken did some of his early work for Armstrong in 1872. By 1873 he is listed at the address of Charles H. Crosby (195 Dorchester Avenue in South Boston) and he remained there for a few years. This firm did good work in ten to fifteen colors. In the 1869 exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association, Charles H. Crosby & Co. received a silver medal for "very fine" chromolithographs. Similar medals were awarded that year to L. Prang & Co. and to the New England Lithographic Company. In a strenuous effort to outstrip the old establishment of Bufford's, Crosby had employed so many good artists at high salaries that by 1876 the firm had to reduce its organization substantially. Gerard Klucken returned to Armstrong's, which by this time was located in Cambridge at the Riverside Press. He remained there for a number of years. He left Armstrong's about 1889 and set up a small trade office in Cambridge (on Pearl Street near Massachusetts Avenue). Here he employed a few lithographic artists including his brother Rudolph Klucken and John Haas, long with Armstrong's, and he did work generally for the trade. He prepared the stones and proof but did no printing. Armstrong, who regarded him highly, continued to send him lithographic work. About 1895 he went to New York. At the Lithographic Exhibition at the Lexington Avenue Opera House in New York in 1896, celebrating the centennial of lithography, Gerard Klucken exhibited specimens of miscellaneous and chromolithography from 1870 to 1890, the years he was doing work for Armstrong. He also presented a "new stone etching process" by his father, Francisco H. Klucken. He was never happy in New York and returned to Boston where for a few years he was at W. H.





Armstrong & Company (photograph showing Hawley, Malthus, Kennedy, Farrar, Souter, Weiss, Ackerman, Hellback, Fault, Bailey, Trinité, Perrot, G. Frizzell, Heil, Siebey, Odenweller)

Forbes. He was an artist and never could work satisfactorily when kept to regular hours. The freedom and artistic sympathy at Armstrong's had brought out his best work. He died in New York at the age of sixty-one in 1912. His obituary in the *American Art Annual* describes him as a portrait painter without reference to his long and successful career as a lithographic artist. Even this portrait work dates back to his days at Armstrong's for there he drew on stone the fine portrait of Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1881 for the *Atlantic Series* and upon one occasion in those days he did a portrait in oil. This was undertaken by him at the request of Chominski, instructor of the Life Class at Armstrong's. Although Klucken

had never worked in this medium before, Chominski claimed that the portrait was better than the work of many artists who specialized in oil.

Gerard Klucken, although only twenty-seven years old when he worked on the *Pope Game Birds* in 1877, was head of the artists' room at Armstrong's. This was a position to which his skill and artistic ability entitled him. The others consulted him and respected his judgment but Armstrong himself kept a continuous eye on the artists' room when in Cambridge and through his artistic criticism and supervision was the real head who saw that the high standards of the firm were maintained.

One of the most skilled lithographic artists—





Armstrong & Company: Frank B. Hawley reviewing proof of A. B. Frost's *Autumn Woodcock*; Jim Kennedy the proofer in background beside his proofing press.

especially with the lithographic pen—was Hoefeldt. Unfortunately, we know little of him except that he was an experienced lithographic artist who had been trained in Germany and who in 1880 did some of the best of the set of Game Fish—the Squeteague, the Sheepshead, the Atlantic Salmon, and the Red Snapper.

Helping Hoefeldt on the Squeteague was E. Boyd Smith, then only twenty years old. A strong artistic leaning had led him to the newly established Normal Art School after which he had joined Armstrong's. He had a ready pencil and always started the day at Armstrong's with sketches of events of the evening before and if the lithographers went on a trip up the river or other outing, he returned with a collection of caricatures, which in such a group could be appreciated for their artistic skill as well as their humor. Smith drew some of the large Trouvelot Astronomical drawings, some of the small Sprague Flowers and

various other lithographs at Armstrong's, but he is best remembered by his fellow lithographers for his work on the Kilbourne Game Fish set. This set of twenty lithographs is of high standing among lithographers because of the large number of stones required—from seventeen to twenty-five apart from the key stone and the embossing stone—the tremendous amount of detailed work on each, and the artistic effect obtained. On the Squeteague alone, twenty stones were required and two months were consumed to produce only the fish after which the background had to be added. As E. Boyd Smith worked on the fish, he would try his pen on the bare lithographic stone just above where he was drawing the fish. Great care has to be taken in lithography not to touch the stone except where one wants an impression to be taken as the stone is very sensitive. Therefore, when Armstrong, while talking to the lithographic artist at the next table, caught a glimpse of these random pen marks on the stone, he feared the stone had been ruined by this young lithographer until he saw that the Kilbourne painting, which was being copied, had a large dark rock at that particular place so that the pen marks by Smith would be obliterated in the final print. Smith drew all the stones for the Southern Redfish in this set and helped Gerard Klucken on the difficult Yellow Perch.

Armstrong and Gerard Klucken, as fine crayon men, held a certain disdain for the more laborious method of stippling. Stippling is a method by which effects are obtained by making a vast number of dots with a pen. Armstrong, as he stood in the long artists' room of the new Lithographic Building, once advised an apprentice never to learn to stipple because "I can hire all the stipplers I want for fifteen dollars a week who can stipple all the way down this room and out into the street." This disdain was hardly justified and probably stemmed in part from the greater freedom of crayon in hand press work and in part from the laboriousness of stippling. To prove its artistic value one has only to observe the borders

in the Birth of Cupid set by E. F. Ackermann—Ackermann the Elder—considered the best ornamental stippler in the country at this time. Many of the outside borders of the lithographs in this set were hand stippled. Perhaps twenty-four hours of work would go into one stone for a part of the border of this lithograph. The solid sides of these borders could be done quickly, a ruling pen being used for the edges and the filling being done with a brush. Softer effects could be obtained with crayon. This was used in 1883 by Gerard Klucken for the wealth of detail in the Longfellow Calendar. This would have been satisfactory for hand printing but in the long run on the steam presses required for this popular calendar the crayon work did not stand up so well; so the later printings do not have the freshness of the earlier ones. Therefore in 1888 when his brother Ralph Klucken was called upon at Armstrong's to lithograph the George Eliot Calendar, he used stipple to a considerable extent with better results in the printing. Another fine example of stipple work—in the commercial field where many prints had to be made—was by Perrot—a trade card for Ayer's Hair Tonic, a woman with blond hair hanging to her waist standing beside a black-maned horse.

Ralph Klucken was a master of all the methods of lithography—not alone in stippling. While somewhat overshadowed in the early years by the abilities of his older brother, Gerard, Ralph Klucken had a standing in his own right in lithography of the period. He was the first apprentice at Armstrong's where apprentices were indentured for four years rather than the traditional seven of the English system. Apprentices were there to get their education. The compensation would hardly appear attractive today and it is doubtful if it could have been much of an inducement then. Four to six dollars a week for board and an allowance for clothes—\$30 at the end of the first year, \$40 the second year, \$50 the third year, and \$60 the fourth year. Sometimes at the end of the apprenticeship a small bonus or graduation present would be given the new journeyman lithog-



Armstrong lithographic artists, 1898  
(Charles Armstrong, son of the founder;  
Charles Odenweller, Charles Bailey,  
Kennedy, Backoff)

rapher and he would then be offered regular wages—about \$20 to \$25 a week. Armstrong & Co. assumed all expenses in case of sickness of an apprentice. In the normal case this was not burdensome, but after one of the apprentices contracted consumption shortly after his arrival and had to be cared for by the firm until his death a year later, greater care was exercised in the selection of apprentices and a physical examination was required. Artistic ability, however, was a more important requisite than physical soundness. The candidate had to submit drawings he had made or give references to teachers under whom he had received art training. If accepted, the apprentices would be given a sound training in all the work of a lithographic artist. They started on black and white lithographs and were assigned tasks for practice at first in crayon work. Frank B. Hawley recalls being given one of Baker's music covers—"Old Black Joe"—to copy when he began his apprenticeship in 1887. After training in the fundamental crayon drawing on stone, the apprentice took up drawing on stone with a pen and in time advanced to color work, at first using only a few stones. Ralph Klucken, with more experience than the usual apprentice, recalls being



given a watercolor of Armstrong's cottage on the Atlantic with instructions to make a lithograph in three or four colors as one of his early assignments. The apprentices had duties for the whole artists' room such as mixing the lithographic ink, running errands, and carrying stones to artists who might be working at home. As time went on they would be assigned to some experienced lithographer to learn from his example and to be allowed under his supervision to do background work—a few of the less important stones—first for the chromos and then for the art sets. In this way Ralph Klucken when he started his apprenticeship was assigned to his brother Gerard. At that time Armstrong's was lithographing the Pope Game Birds and Water Fowl. After Gerard Klucken had completed one of the stones for the Mallard Duck (Plate LV), it broke in the printing. The apprentice, Ralph Klucken, was given the job of doing over this stone, an excellent training for an apprentice because he could see just how an experienced lithographer had done the stone originally. He also did background stones for others in this set, the Snipe (Plate II) and the Blue Bill Duck (Plate VIII). To do such work in the first year of his apprenticeship was unusual but Ralph Klucken had had an excellent training before he started; he had been trained by his father, a vignette engraver on stone, and had spent all his idle hours as a boy in his father's shop. As a result he moved ahead faster than the usual apprentice and by the end of the first year of his apprenticeship was lithographing chromos himself. Long before the end of his apprenticeship he was doing the work of a journeyman lithographer. Even with all this rapid progress it was not until three years after the completion of his apprenticeship that Ralph Klucken was entrusted with a color lithograph of the facsimile class to complete himself. This was one of the Cozzens' Yachts. In general, a considerably longer period after completion of apprenticeship was necessary before undertaking work of this character.

The apprentice's training was not limited to

lithographic work; he also had to attend Art School two or three nights a week. This was a part of his education and any absences were reported to Armstrong. At evening Art School he learned to draw from casts. Then there was the Life Class at Armstrong's which the apprentices were free to join. Upon completion of their four years' training, the apprentices received a certificate like that issued in December 1891 to Frank Bryant Hawley certifying that he had "served a regular apprenticeship of Four Years in the trade of a Lithographic Artist." Armstrong & Co. proceeded in the certificate to "cheerfully recommend him as a person who possesses a thorough knowledge of the department of the business to which he has been apprenticed." E. Boyd Smith, a lithographic artist who served his apprenticeship at Armstrong's, recalls the surroundings in Daye Court in the Seventies. "Mr. Armstrong housed the artists in a small dwelling house—rented no doubt—a make shift," but like the other lithographers he looked back with pleasure to his days at Armstrong's: "our life was pleasant, wages good and we were seldom hurried." He recalls that Mr. Armstrong "would set up a finished lithograph beside the original drawing, and say to the customer—in an apparently innocent way—'Now I can't tell which is the original.' We laughed over this—but as a matter of fact, there was something in it—we were rather proud of our work—the Artist Touch. When I left I went to Paris—to try and become a *real* artist—and passed nearly twenty years in France." During these years in France he studied and later taught painting, exhibiting both in Paris and in this country. His readiness at caricature as demonstrated at Armstrong's stood him in good stead for he could always find a ready market for these with the French periodicals of the day. He later recorded something of the life he had observed in France in a book of sketches of French rural life entitled *My Village* "with illustrations by the author" published by C. Scribner's Sons in 1896, describing Valombre, a village thirty miles north of Paris,



where he lived. After the turn of the century he was to illustrate many important books for Houghton, Mifflin and other publishers, including *Two Years Before The Mast* by Richard Henry

Dana, *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, and *Plantation Pageants* by Joel Chandler Harris.

LEEDS ARMSTRONG WHEELER



Charles Armstrong (1906 photograph)



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